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PP RUEHBZ RUEHGI
DE RUEHGI #0098 1270757
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P R 070757Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0900
INFO RHMFISS/AFRICOM
RUEHBZ/AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE 0160
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0263
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0273
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 0174
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0121
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0140
RUEHNJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA 0450
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 0004
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0433
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0430
RUEHGI/AMEMBASSY BANGUI 1127

UNCLAS BANGUI 000098

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/C
YAOUNDE FOR PAO
NDJAMENA FOR PAO
NOUAKCHOTT FOR PAO
PARIS FOR AFRICA REGIONAL SERVICES

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [OEXC](#) [ODIP](#) [CT](#)

SUBJECT: CONCERT FOR PEACE GIVEN AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE

REF: 09 BANGUI 14

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: On Tuesday, 6 May 2009, the Ambassador hosted a concert by students from Bangui University. The students sang songs calling for peace and reconciliation in English, French and Sango to an appreciative audience of government ministers, the Diplomatic corps, civil society and the American community. The performance was recorded for broadcast by the country's largest private radio station, state radio, and by Central African Television. Post hopes to use this concert as the kick off of its effort to support the Follow-Up Committee set up after the national political dialog (DPI) of December 2008 and the elections scheduled for 2010. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) This ``concert for peace'' was held in support of the Follow-Up Committee, created to implement the accords signed after the DPI. The Committee has been beset by problems, including deficiencies in funding and a lack of office space and other support by the government. Post hosted the concert to refocus attention upon the work of the Committee and the growing insecurity in the country. The Ambassador gave opening remarks in Sango (to much applause), French, and English calling for peace and unity in the country as well as repeating his call for all rebel groups to cease violent actions.

¶3. (U) The Post arranged for a choral group from the University to perform for national television and radio (both state and independent) at the Residence. The group put together a performance which included dramatic commentary on the effects of the ongoing Central African rebellions on their lives, as well as the problems of ethnic integration (The last soliloquy being a most impressive commentary by a young Hausa, a group doubly excluded as nomads and Muslims). The program included four African-American spirituals, a song about peace and development in French, and finally a song about the potential of Central Africa in Sango. The national anthem of the Central African Republic (CAR) completed the performance. The Ambassador joined the students on guitar for the song in Sango. The Prime Minister, the President of the National Assembly, and two Ministers of State were in attendance, as were several other ministers and ambassadors. The guest list was, however, aimed at members of Central Africa's small and fragile civil society, including members of the Follow-Up Committee, the press, university students, and a member of the Muslim religious

establishment. Initial response has been tremendously enthusiastic. Dependent upon the quality of footage obtained by Central African Television, Post hopes to use the recording on our website and on visits to Central African towns.

¶4. (U) The Post will build upon the momentum created by the concert by pursuing meetings with all relevant actors in the peace process and the upcoming elections of the 2010. Post's message that peace and democracy in Central Africa is vital not only to American interests, but also to Central African wellbeing, will be highlighted throughout these meetings. The Ambassador's candidness with the media will likely assure good coverage of each of the meetings and Post has developed a core message that we intend to communicate to the CARG and media after each meeting.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: The message of the concert, as well as its emotional rendition, was clear to all present and should be well communicated in the national press. The unusual nature of the presentation was also useful in a country with often stifling protocol and Post counts on the ``American-ness'' of the production to effectively portray the message. Post is creating a unique and popular communications technique in a country traditionally dominated by the French, and will continue to present our message and image creatively in pursuit of Post's strategic goals. All of that said, it is sadly necessary to repeat that CAR government and society are not particularly open to public debate and we must remain very modest in our expectations: today, a demonstration by just 100 striking teachers was broken up with tear gas and live rounds fired in the air. END COMMENT.

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